

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A wheel assembly, comprising:

a wheel having a disk and a rim complementary to the disk, the disk and rim including an outer surface, the rim including an outer edge extending circumferentially about the rim;

a ring-shaped flange member formed separately from the wheel; and

a wheel cladding member having a central portion and an outer periphery complimentary to the central portion, the outer periphery including a circumferentially extending channel that receives the flange member therein;

wherein the cladding member is operably coupled to the wheel such that the central portion of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the disk of the wheel and the outer periphery of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the rim of the wheel, and wherein the channel of the cladding member is located substantially proximate the outer edge of the rim.

2. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the flange member includes an inner surface, the rim of the wheel includes a circumferentially extending groove, and wherein at least a portion of the inner surface of the flange is located within the groove.

3. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 2, wherein the groove is defined between a circumferentially extending first tab located proximate the outer edge of the rim, and a circumferentially extending second tab located radially inward from the first tab.

4. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 3, wherein the inner surface of the flange member includes a first portion and a second portion offset from the first portion, the first portion is located between the first tab and the second tab, and wherein at least part of the second portion is radially co-aligned with a select one of the first tab and the second tab.
5. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 4, wherein at least part of the second portion of the inner surface of the flange member is radially aligned with the first tab of the wheel, and wherein an outer surface of the flange member is aligned with an inner surface of the wheel.
6. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 5, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip is configured to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.
7. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 6, wherein the annular lip wraps about the inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.
8. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip provides a positive lock between the flange member and the cladding member.
9. (currently amended) The wheel assembly of claim 8, wherein the flange member includes a curved outer surface, and wherein the annular lip wraps about the curved outer surface of the flange member, thereby creating the positive lock.
10. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the flange member is coupled with the cladding member by an adhesive.

11. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the cladding member is coupled with the wheel by an adhesive.

12. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip provides a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.

13. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 12, wherein the annular lip wraps about an inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.

14. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the cladding member comprises stainless steel.

15. (currently amended) A wheel cover assembly adapted to cover a vehicle wheel having a disk and a rim complementary to the disk, the disk and rim including an outer surface, the rim including an outer edge extending circumferentially about the rim, the wheel cover assembly comprising:

a ring-shaped flange member formed separately from the wheel; and

a wheel cladding member having a central portion and an outer periphery complimentary to the central portion, the outer periphery including a circumferentially extending channel that receives the flange member therein;

wherein the cladding member is adapted to be coupled to the vehicle wheel such that the central portion of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the disk of the wheel and the periphery of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the rim of the wheel, and wherein the flange member is adapted to be located substantially proximate the outer edge of the rim.

16. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein the flange member includes an inner surface that is adapted to be closely received within a groove extending circumferentially about the rim of the wheel.

17. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 16, wherein the inner surface of the flange member includes a first portion and a second portion offset from the first portion, the first portion is adapted to be located within the groove of the wheel, and wherein at least a part of the second portion is not located within the groove of the wheel.

18. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein cladding member is configured such that an outer surface of the flange member is adapted to align with an inner surface of the wheel.

19. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 18, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip is configured to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.

20. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 19, wherein the annular lip is adapted to wrap about the inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.

21. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip provides a positive lock between the flange member and the cladding member.

22. (currently amended) The wheel cover assembly of claim 21, wherein the flange member includes ~~[[an]]~~ a curved outer surface, and wherein the annular lip wraps about the curved outer surface of the flange member, thereby creating the positive lock.

23. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein the flange member is coupled with the cladding member by an adhesive.

24. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein the cladding member includes an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the annular lip is configured to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.

25. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 24, wherein the annular lip is adapted to wrap about an inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.

26. (original) The wheel cover assembly of claim 15, wherein the cladding member comprises stainless steel.

27. (original) A method for assembling a wheel cover assembly with a vehicle wheel to form a wheel assembly, the method comprising:

- providing a wheel cladding member having a central portion and an outer periphery complementary to the central portion, the outer periphery including a circumferentially extending channel;

- providing a ring-shaped flange member;

- locating the flange member within the channel of the cladding member;

- providing a vehicle wheel having a disk and a rim complementary to the disk, the disk and rim including an outer surface, the rim including an outer edge extending circumferentially about the rim; and

- coupling the cladding member with the wheel such that the central portion of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the disk of the wheel and the periphery of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the rim of the wheel, and such that the channel of the cladding member is located substantially proximate the outer edge of the rim.

28. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein the step of providing the flange member includes providing the flange member with an inner surface, the step of providing the wheel includes providing the rim of the wheel with a circumferentially extending groove, and further including:

aligning at least a portion of the inner surface of the flange within the groove prior to the coupling step.

29. (original) The method of claim 28, wherein step of providing the cladding member includes providing the cladding member with an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes forming the annular lip to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.

30. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes forming the annular lip about an inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.

31. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein step of providing the cladding member includes providing the cladding member with an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery; and further including:

coupling the flange member with the cladding member by forming the annular lip to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the flange member, subsequent to locating the flange member within the channel of the cladding member.

32. (original) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of coupling the flange member to the cladding member is completed prior to coupling the cladding member to the wheel.

33. (original) The method of claim 27, wherein step of providing the cladding member includes providing the cladding member with an annular lip complementary to the outer periphery, and wherein the step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes forming the annular lip to provide a positive lock between the cladding member and the wheel.

34. (original) The method of claim 33, wherein step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes forming the annular lip about an inner surface of the wheel, thereby creating the positive lock.

35. (original) The method of claim 27, further including:

coupling the flange member with the cladding member by placing an adhesive within the channel of the cladding member prior to locating the flange member within the channel of the cladding member.

36. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes placing an adhesive between the cladding member and the wheel.

37. (original) The method of claim 36, wherein the step of coupling the cladding member with the wheel includes placing an adhesive between the flange member and the wheel.

38. (currently amended) A wheel assembly, comprising:

a wheel having a disk and a rim complementary to the disk, the disk and rim including an outer surface, the rim including an outer edge extending circumferentially about the rim; and

a wheel cladding member having a central portion and an outer periphery complimentary to the central portion and a lip portion complimentary to the outer

periphery, wherein the lip portion folds back substantially against the outer periphery~~[[~~
~~thereby creating a flangeless hem extending circumferentially about the wheel~~
~~cladding]]~~ such that the outer periphery and the lip portion are substantially coplanar;

wherein the cladding member is operably coupled to the wheel such that the central portion of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the disk of the wheel and the outer periphery of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of the rim of the wheel.

39. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 38, wherein the outer periphery of the cladding member includes a circumferentially and outwardly extending shoulder.

40. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 39, wherein the shoulder extends outwardly to a distance substantially similar to a thickness of the lip portion of the cladding member.

41. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 40, wherein the rim of the wheel includes a circumferentially extending tab radially offset from the outer edge of the rim, and wherein the shoulder of the cladding is aligned within the tab, thereby axially aligning the cladding member with the wheel.

42. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 38, wherein the lip portion of the wheel cladding is folded back against the outer periphery, such that an inner surface of the lip portion is in contact with an inner surface of the outer periphery.

43. (currently amended) The wheel assembly of claim 38, wherein the wheel includes a radially-extending shoulder positioned between the outer periphery and the lip portion and wherein the lip portion is ~~completely~~ located completely radially outward from the ~~[[tab]]~~ shoulder.

44. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 38, wherein the cladding member is coupled with the wheel by an adhesive.

45. (original) The wheel assembly of claim 38, wherein the cladding member comprises stainless steel.

46. (currently amended) A wheel cladding adapted to cover a vehicle wheel having a disk and a rim complementary to the disk, the disk and rim including an outer surface, the rim including an outer edge extending circumferentially about the rim, the wheel cladding comprising:

a central portion;

an outer periphery complimentary to the central portion; and

a lip portion complimentary to the outer periphery, wherein the lip portion folds back substantially against the outer periphery, ~~thereby creating a flangeless hem extending circumferentially about the cladding member~~ such that the outer periphery and the lip portion are substantially coplanar;

wherein the cladding member is adapted to be coupled to a wheel such that the central portion of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of a disk of the wheel and the outer periphery of the cladding member is aligned with at least a portion of a rim of the wheel.

47. (original) The wheel cover of claim 46, wherein the outer periphery of the cladding member includes a circumferentially and outwardly extending shoulder.

48. (original) The wheel cover of claim 47, wherein the shoulder extends outwardly to a distance substantially similar to a thickness of the lip portion of the cladding member.

49. (original) The wheel cover of claim 48, wherein the shoulder of the cladding member is adapted to aligned within a tab that extends circumferentially about the rim

of the wheel and is radially offset from the outer edge of the rim, thereby axially aligning the cladding member with the wheel.

50. (original) The wheel cover of claim 46, wherein the lip portion of the cladding member is folded back against the outer periphery, such that an inner surface of the lip portion is in contact with an inner surface of the outer periphery.

51. (original) The wheel cover of claim 46, wherein the cladding member comprises stainless steel.